

Abstract

This research project performs a discourse analysis on a corpus of speeches from Presidents of the European Commission relating to Syria from the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011 to the formulation of the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement. It addresses the following research question: In what ways has the speech of the President of the European Commission contributed to the securitization of migration resulting from the Syrian civil war? Through the use of securitization theory and leadership theory, several conclusions were drawn from the results of the discourse analysis. These included identifying a range of discursive and non-discursive practices deployed by both Barroso and Juncker to contribute to the securitization of migration into the EU. In Juncker's case, he simultaneously attempted to de-securitize the issue and pushed for policies which sought to provide a long-term de-securitized solution to the phenomenon of irregular migration into the European Union. Juncker's partial success as a transformative leader in the EU's migration and asylum seeker policy shows that the habitus of the President is influential in regard to the formulation of the EU's refugee and asylum policy. The situational-institutional context can, however, prevent the President from implementing their desired policies.